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ABSTRACT

Chorti, a Mayan language spoken in eastern Guatemala, is analyzed in this paper on the basis of a story text provided by an adult native speaker. A phonological description of Chorti is presented for background information; syllables, suprasegmentals, pause groups, articulation, and phonological rules are all considered. The author presents the transcription of the narrative along with a sentence by sentence translation. Notes on the text explain various structural phenomena as well as word interpretation where necessary. A list of references is included. (VM)

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The Basilisk: A Chortí (Mayan) Text[1]

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Introduction

Chortí is a Mayan language spoken in eastern Guatemala around the town of Jocotán (Chiquimula) and in adjacent municipios.[2] The text presented here is taken from a tape recorded in 1964 by Sr. Isidro González, who was born in 1926 in Pelillo Negro, a village in Jocotán. The text is followed by notes on its language and content.

The text is presented in a segmental notation which is given a fully componential interpretation by explicit rules. Since the conventions will not be familiar, there is a brief explanation of the phonological notation and rules; an extended and revised treatment of the phonology and morphophonemics is planned.

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Phonology

Chortí utterances are composed of one or more pause groups, each an uninterrupted sequence of one or more syllables bounded by intersyllabic pauses. Some pause groups are accompanied by a pitch contour.

There are two distinct pauses: pause, / + /, a brief, stressless span of silence, and hesitation, / -- /, a longer stressless span of silence, sometimes lasting a second or more, and usually preceded by progressively increasing drawling, laryngealization, or both, spanning the immediately preceding segment or segments. Note that these pauses are phonetically as well as functionally distinct.

There are two pitch contours, rise, / , /, and fall, / . /. In long pause groups, the rise or fall occurs during the last syllable or syllables; in shorter groups it sometimes spans the entire group. Some groups, especially those ending with a hesitation, do not have a pitch contour, being approximately level in pitch. At present, it does not appear that the amount of rise or fall is significant, only the direction of pitch change.

A syllable is composed of a stress, a nucleus, and sometimes an onset, a coda, or both. Onsets and codas consist of one, two, or three consonant segments. A nucleus consists of one or two peak segments sometimes preceded or followed by one or two satellites.[3]

The ultimate phonological constituents are the distinctive (articulatory) components, the features of a phonetic space whose dimensions are the active articulators, the relative articulatory aperture left by each, special configurations of the front of the tongue, and contrastive manner and stress of articulation.[4] The articulators are the lip (L), the front of the tongue (F), including the apex, the back of the tongue (B), including the root, the velum (N), and the vocal bands (G); the degrees of aperture are obstruent (0), close (1), mid (2), and open (3); the configurations are sibilant (S), retroflex (R) and lateral (%). The distinction between tense (T) and lax (X) manners is made on impressionistic rather than instrumental grounds, but it is thought to correspond to relatively high or low back pressure behind the point of articulation.[5] Heavy (") and light (') stresses are also judged impressionistically.

Stress components span, and thereby delimit, entire syllables. The combinations or bundles of the other distinctive components which define segmental transcription symbols are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	/	p	f	b	m	t	x	d	n	k	h	g	ŋ	?	s	r	l	a	ã	e	ẽ	i	ĩ	o	õ	u	ũ	'	"	/	
L			O	O	O													3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1				L
		T	X	X	X																										
F							O	O	O									3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	3				F
						T	X	X	X																						
B										O	O	O						2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1				B
										T	X	X	X																		
N																															N
			T	T	X		T	T	X		T	T	X					T	X	T	X	T	X	T	X	T	X				
G				O				O				O																			G
				X				X				X		T																	
-															S	R	%														-
																												'	"		

Lar ngealization

In Chortí, as in other Mayan languages, there are both plain and glottalized or 'ejective' obstruents, and both single (short) and geminate (long) vowels, as well as more complex nuclei. The second part of geminate nuclei is laryngealized. That is, there are rapid, periodic interruptions of the vibration of the vocal bands during such segments, so that corresponding portions of spectrograms show vertical bands of white cutting across the voice bar and other formants, and a characteristic 'creaky voice' is heard. Although the physiological details are not well understood, it may be that the glottal closure in glottalized obstruents and the laryngealized voicing in long nuclei are both due to the same articulation, probably a tensing of the vocal bands greater than the normal tension associated with ordinary voicing.[6] In any case, the higher-than-normal air pressure within the oral cavity (in the obstruents) or the pulmonic cavity (in the vowels) allows both phenomena to be characterized by the feature GT.

The different manifestations of the glottal articulation are to be explained by reference to the different oral articulations they accompany. Because of the shapes and relative positions of the various articulators, high oral air pressure tends to force the nasal and glottal articulators more firmly closed and to push open the oral articulator. Conversely a lowered, negative oral air pressure, produced by depressing the larynx with the glottis closed and expanding the oral cavity, tends to maintain complete closure of at least some oral

articulators, while forcing the vocal bands into laryngealized voicing (perhaps of a different type from that described by Ladefoged 1967). Segments of this implosive glottalized type are common in other Mayan languages, but are found only in the Camotán dialect of Chortí. The appropriate notation is ?b for LOX,NT,GT, as against ?p for LOT,NT,GT. The components GT are represented in the segmental notation by a / ? / preceding the symbol for the segment with tensed glottal articulator. Thus, /"?ka?ar / 'remembering' consists of four segments, ?k-a-?a-r, making up a heavy-stressed syllable. During the dorsal stop, the glottis is fully closed, while during the second / a / segment, the glottis is producing laryngealized voice. In a form like / "?txa?ar / 'lying', the glottal closure is maintained through the stop and spirant segments of the onset, and the next two segments are voiced and laryngealized, respectively. After the onset, the form is like / "?ka?ar /.

Each segment of an utterance, then, as shown in Table 1, is characterized by the aperture and state of the glottal, nasal and oral articulators as they interact to open and close the oral and pulmonic cavities and the nasal passage, producing relatively high or low air pressure within the cavities at various times. A segment is laryngealized (if GT) or plain (otherwise), nasalized (if NX) or oral (otherwise), and an obstruent (if LO, FO, or BO) or a vowel (otherwise). A summary of the principal segment types is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Segment Type:	Articulator States:		
	Oral	Nasal	Glottal
Plain Voiceless Stop	0T	0T	3X
Laryngealized Stop	0T	0T	0T
Plain Voiced Stop	0X	0T	0X
Plain Voiceless Spirant	0X	0T	3X
Laryngealized Spirant	0X	0T	0T
Voiced Nasal Consonant	0X	3X	0X
Voiceless Nasal Consonant	0X	3X	3X
Voiced Oral Vowel	1,2,3X	0T	0X
Voiced Nasalized Vowel	1,2,3X	3X	0X
Voiceless Oral Vowel	1,2,3X	0T	3X
Laryngealized Oral Vowel	1,2,3X	0T	0T

Each segmental symbol, used in the transcription of a portion of discourse, may be interpreted as standing for a simultaneous bundle of components arranged in a column beneath it. The bundle consists of an aperture and manner value for every articulator, a stress value, and for some segments, a configuration. Table 3 is an unordered set of rules, each applying to a single column of components as given by Table 1, none applying across the syllable boundaries specified by stress spans, and each filling in some of the componential values, either unconditionally (in the case of determined values) or conditionally. The rules are meant to apply repeatedly and in any order until all values have been supplied and further application to a given pause group is vacuous. They are not rewrite rules. The components in the second column (headed <u>are also</u>) are added to those in the first column (provided any conditions stated in the third column are met.) The commas signify inclusive alternation.

The phonetic scheme which the rules execute holds that a syllable nucleus colors the syllable margins: the rules assimilate otherwise unspecified features to those of the syllable nucleus.

Table 3

Variables

a = L, F, B, N, G

o = L, F, B

n = 0, 1, 2, 3

v = 1, 2, 3

m = T, X, R, S, %

Rules

All:	are also:	if:
av	aX	
aT	aONT	
NX	N3	
S, R, %	FOXNT	
', ", GT, ., ,	anm	before anm
anm	', "	after ', "
oO	GT	after GT
oONT	G3	not after GT
LO	FvBvNnm	before, after FvBvNnm
FO	LvBvNnm	before, after LvBvNnm
LO, FO	B3	after BOXG3 and not before B1, B2.
BO	LvFvNnm	before, after LvFvNnm
LvFvBv	GT	after GXGT
LXFXBX	G3	after BnBnBOXG3
LvFvBv, NX	GOX	not after BnBnBOXG3, GXGT

The effects of these rules are illustrated in Table 4, showing the nineteenth and twentieth pause groups of the text. In the parts A and B, the components given by Table 1 are in boldface. In part B, the components added by rules of Table 3 are in roman type. Note that a segment, a minimum homogeneous span, often corresponds to more than one symbol and column in this linear notation, but that no symbol represents more than one segment. The values in part B of Table 4 are sometimes specified redundantly by two or more rules, or indirectly by the joint effects of two or more rules, or both. Consider the / r / in Table 4, for instance. According to Table 1, its distinctive component is just R (retroflexion). In Table 3, one rule specifies that all S, R, and % (Sibilants, Retroflexes, and Laterals) are FOXNT (Lax frontal obstruents with tensed velum) and another rule specifies that all aT (Tensed articulators -- L, F, B, N, or G) are aONT (Whatever articulator is tensed is at aperture O, and the velum is tensed). It follows immediately that if N is the tensed articulator, it is at aperture O. These rules jointly and redundantly supply the O aperture for the R segment here. The aT rule also supplies the O aperture for the / ?t / segment later in the same group. Table 1 supplies the distinctive components GT for / ? / and FT for / t /. Since all aT are AONT, these additional features are added, giving NOTGOT in the first column and FOTNOT in the next, by two applications to each column. Since all oO are GT after GT, and since F is in o, the features GT are added to the / t / column and the aT rule reapplies, giving GOT there. The re-

maining features are added by assimilations to either the syllable nucleus or the stress columns, as the reader may verify for himself. Part C of Table 4 shows the same two pause groups, this time in a fully componential notation derived from the other array of components by deleting redundant symbols to the right of any component, so as to leave only the starting state and subsequent change-points of each articulator.

Any pause group can be represented in these three ways by first looking up the distinctive components of each segmental symbol in Table 1, applying the rules of Table 3, and deleting the repetitions, as shown in parts A, B, and C here. Alternatively, a componential representation can be reduced to a string of segmental symbols by reversing these steps: the notation is biunique. If reduction to segmental symbols were contemplated, rather than expansion to a componential notation, Table 3 might be restated in order to make this task easier.

Pitch contours may be represented by simply substituting the appropriate componential symbol at the beginning of a group. Stress spans, on the other hand, must be observed or taken as given in applying the rules: these do not state, for instance, whether / ?a?a / falls into one syllable, / '?a?a /, or two, / '?a'?a /. They are stated so as to apply to either of these sequences.

Table 4: Part A

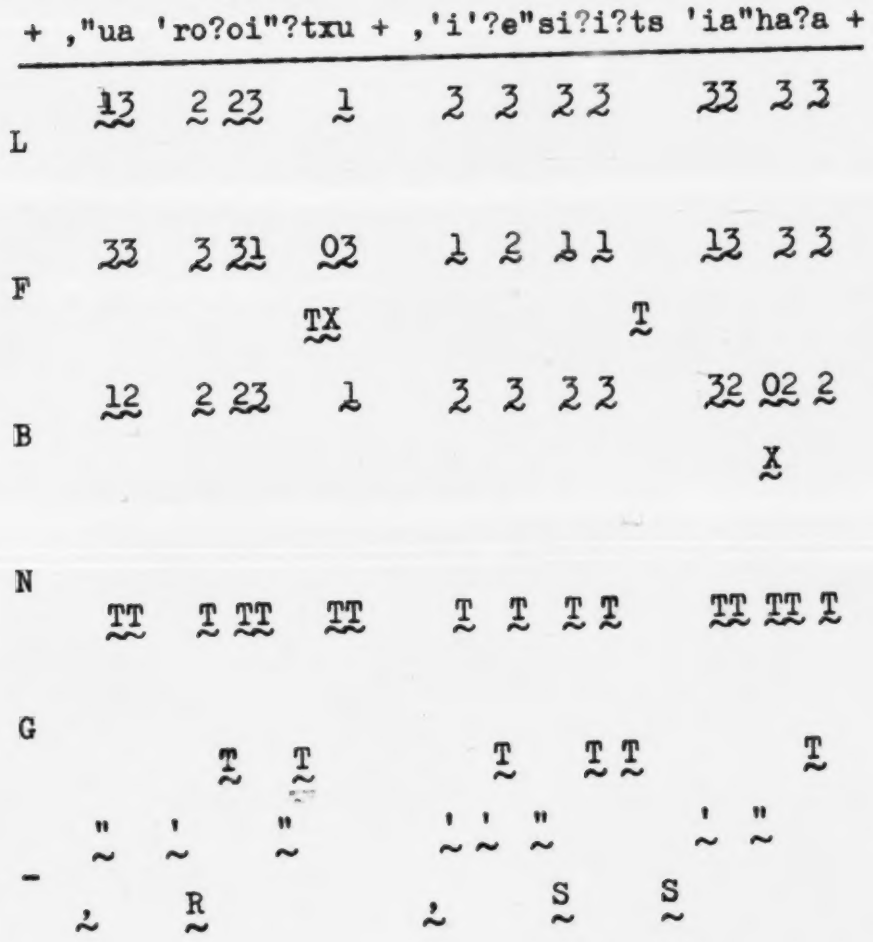

Table 4: Part B

	+ ,"ua 'ro?oi"?txu +	,'i'?e"si?i?ts 'ia"ha?a +
L	1113 22222311111	333333333333333 33333333
	XXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX
F	3333 00333100003	111222001110000 11333333
	XXXX XXXXXXTTTXX	XXXXXXXXXXXTTX XXXXXXXX
B	1112 22222311111	333333333333333 33200222
	XXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX
N	0000 00000000000	000000000000000 00000000
	TTTT TTTTTTTTTTT	TTTTTTTTTTTTTTT TTTTTTTT
G	0000 33300000000	000000330000000 00033000
	XXXX XXXTTXTTTTX	XXXTTXXXXTTTTT XXXXXXTT
-	"""" ' ' ' ' ' """"""	' ' ' ' ' ' """""""""" ' ' """"""
	2 RR	2 SS S

Table 4: Part C

	+ ,"ua 'ro?oi"?txu +	+ ,'i'?e"si?i?ts 'ia"ha?a +
L	1 3 2 31	3
	X	X
F	3 0 3 10 3	1 2 0 1 0 1 3
	X	X T X
B	1 2 31	3 20 2
	X	X
N	X	X
	O	O
	T	T
G	O 30	O 30 30
	X T XT X	X T X T X T
	" ' "	' ' " ' "
-	, R	, S S

The Text

The structure of the narrative reflects González' considerable experience as an informant. After an introductory formula (1-3), the legendary incident is reported (4-29), the injured Basilisk calls to the Angel Gabriel for help (30-39), Gabriel reprimands the Boy, who apologizes (40-94), and Gabriel revives the Basilisk (95-119). Then, the time of reference shifts to the present for an explanation of the crest (120-132), a reminder of the habitual nodding movement of the Basilisk (133-148), which in turn explains the attitudes and comments of people about the Basilisk (148-163). The conclusion (164-168) contains two of the three common formulae: "I don't know if it's true" and "So they believe". Together with the introductory formula, these make up a frame around the report, which is told by the informant as if quoting the person who told it to him, through the use of a grammatical device explained in the notes. The explanatory passages González has worked into the flow of action are absent from the texts given by other informants; dialogue, alone or with a few phrases of commentary, makes up the bulk of these.

In the transcription, each heavy-stressed syllable is followed by a space, pauses are set off by single spaces, and numbers by double spaces, in order to make the notation easier to read. No other significance attaches to the spacing.

Each pause group is numbered, counting from the beginning of the text. Each utterance begins with the number of its first pause group. The translation and notes are all keyed to these numbers.

```
1  + 'a"ian 'o'tron"te?e -- ,'oh'ro"ner + .'a'txe?e"na
'kon"tar +
4  + "txe 'ke?e -- ,'tan"te?e "di 'ia + 'e?e -- ,'men
"ta 'do 'toh"ro?o?k 'kri"a 'da"?pir 'tua?a -- 'e?e --
.'aŋ'he"lo?p + .'a"ni +
11  + "i?i -- ."txe 'ke'tah'ui"na + "ua?ar -- ."ua
'ro?oi"?txu + ,'u"me 'nin"te?e + "si?i?ts + ,'ir"na +
,'pa"kar 'ta"mu?ut 'e"txa?a +
19  + ,"ua 'ro?oi"?txu + ,'i'?e"si?i?ts 'ia"ha?a + ,'u
'uah"pi + 'in -- 'te?e -- ,"ta'ho + ,'u'na?a?k"?peht +
.'u?u"ri + .'ta"mar +
28  + ,'i"txe "ke?e 'ta'mu?u"tah 'nu"hor + .'?tsah"uan
'u"na?a '?ke"?peht 'xe'huh"ra 'ta"mar +
30  + 'en"ton 'ses -- .'in'ta"kix '?a?a"ru +
32  + .'u'peh"ka + 'u?u -- 'u?u -- .'pa"tron + 'u'ia?a
"re + .'tu"?ka "tik "si?i?ts + .'u'?txi?itx"?pe?en +
.'u'pa"si "nio?or +
40  + ,'en"ton 'ses + ,'ta"ri + 'e?e -- .'e"?aŋ 'hel +
'xe?e 'u'?ka"?pa?a -- .'ga"briel +  "aŋ 'hel -- .'ga
"briel +
48  + ,'ta"ri '?u'ui"ra + ,"?txa?ar + ,"uar + .'u'ku
"kru?u "?pa 'ta"mu?ut 'e"rum +
52  + .'a'ro?p"na 'e"si?i?ts +
53  + 'tu'?kix"to 'tua?a -- 'a'?txi?i?tx"?pa 'ni?i --
,'ni'kri"ia 'da + "ma "ka?a 'ui"ra 'ke?e -- 'e"ha?ax
```

1 There is another story which is told.

4 It is said that at one time, the one called Basilisk was the servant of the Angels.

11 And it is said she was found standing and grinding by a boy; she was seen bending over the quern.

19 She was grinding, and the boy took a piece from the side of a pot and threw it.

28 And it is said that the potsherd which he threw stuck in the top of her head.

30 Then she began to cry out.

32 She called to her master, saying "What boy has injured me, opening up my head?"

40 Then came the Angel whose name is Gabriel. The Angel Gabriel.

48 He came and saw her lying writhing on the ground.

52 He spoke to the boy:

53 "How did you come to hurt my servant? Didn't you

-- ,'e'ni'kri"a 'da + 'i?i -- ,'?ah"rer 'ta"ka 'e"ra +

.'e'ni"kria 'da + ."uar + .'u"txe 'ni'man"da 'do +

64 + .'e"si?i?ts 'txe + .'ko"txa 'ma?a"txin 'na?a"ta

'hai + .'a'kri"a 'da + "ne?en 'iŋ'gui"ra 'ke?e -- 'e?e

-- 'kual"ker -- .'a'ni"mal 'pa"kar 'ta"mu?ut 'e

"txa?a +

71 + ,'i'po"re 'so + .'ũ?ũŋ"gri + "pe 'ro"ma "ha?ax

-- ,'ta'ma"tun 'u?uŋ"gri + .'ta"ma 'u'na?a?k"?peht 'ta

'ka'u?uŋ"gri + 'in'na?a"ta 'ke?e'ma?a"txi -- .'a'txa

"mai +

78 + ."pe 'ro"txe "tua?a + 'ma?a"txi 'ka'na?a"ta

'ke?e -- ,'ha?a"xir + "man "tran 'tua?a -- ,'a'txa

"mai +

83 + ,'i'e"ra + ,'?txi?i?tx"?pa + "por 'ke?e -- ,'?in

'iah"rer -- 'a'pa"su?u "ho?o -- 'u"tah 'nu"hor + ,'ta

'mu"na?a '?ke"?peht +

90 + 'i?i -- ,'a"go 'ra + 'ket"pa 'u"ta?a -- 'u"ta

"hur 'e"?peht + .'ta"ma 'u"tah 'nu"hor +

95 + ,'en"ton 'ses + ,'i"xin + "kai + 'uht"na -- 'u?u

-- ,'u'txi"kin + 'e?e -- .'sut"pa?a '?pix"?ka +

103 + ,"pe 'ro + ,'u'na?a'?ke"?peht + ,'ma?a'txix"to

+ 'e?e -- ,'lo'?kes"na 'tu?u'hor"ia?a + 'por'ke?e --

,'in'iah"rer 'o"txoi + '?tsah"uan 'ta'ma?a -- 'u"tah

'nu"hor +

112 + 'i?i -- "txe 'ke?e -- 'kai"ta?a "ni -- ,'lo

'?kes"na + 'ma?a"txu?u '?ka"ni + ,'a?a"ru 'ta"kar +

"por 'ke?e -- .'?tsah"uan 'ta"ma '?u'ue?e"rir +

see that she is my servant? My only servant, who was just doing my bidding?"

64 The boy said, "But I didn't know she was your servant! I saw some animal bending over the quern.

71 And so, I threw at it, but I didn't throw a stone: I threw a potsherd. I didn't think she would die."

78 But he was asked, "Didn't you know that she is not difficult to kill?

83 And now she is injured, because you've completely opened up her -- the top of her head with the potsherd.

90 And now the piece of pot stays in the top of her head."

95 Then he went and began to blow in her ear, and she came back to life.

103 But the potsherd was not removed from her head, because it had gone in once and for all and stuck in the top of her head.

112 And it is said that when they began to take it out she didn't like it, and cried out from it, because it was stuck into her flesh.

```
120  + ,'i'po"re 'six"to + ,'e'toh"ro?o?k 'ko"ne?er +
,'ka'ui"ra + 'e?e -- 'a"ian + 'in"te?e -- "ko'sa -- ,'ta
"kar + .'ta'mu?u"tah 'nu"hor + ."por 'ke?e -- "txe 'ke?e
-- .'u'na?a?k"?peht + .'tia?a'huh"ra +
133  + 'i'ko"ne?er 'e'toh"ro?o?k 'tia?a -- ,'u'ui"ro?on
+ ,"hai 'ta'ma"u?ut 'e"te?e + ,'pa"kar + 'o?o -- ,'ta
"ma 'u?ut"tun + ,'pa"kar + 'o'ta"mu?u 'na?a?k"?txen +
,'tia?a'pa"kar + ,'lo'ke'u"txe 'kon"da '?u'ui"ro?on +
,'u'iuh"ku?u "hor + .'ta'mu?ut'e"te?e + "txe 'ke?e --
."hu?utx 'u"txe + ."por 'ke?e'ah"hu?utx 'a"ni +
148  + .'i'po"re 'so "?pan 'u"txe 'ko"ne?er 'kon'da'u'ui
"ro?on +
149  + ,'i'po"re 'so 'txe'e"hen 'te + ,'ko"ne?er +
,"ke?e 'toh"ro?o?k + ,"kuan 'do?o'ui"ro?on + ,'u'iuh
"ku?u "hor + ,'ta"mu?ut 'e"te?e +
155  + '?pa"nix 'e?e -- 'ber"da + ."ua 'ro?oi"?txu +
158  + "txe?e "hen 'te'ke?e -- 'ke?e -- '?ka"ni -- ,'u
'iah"?ko?on 'iŋ'koht'u"pa?a 'u'?ku"xi + ,'i'po"re 'so'u
'uir"sio?on + .'ko"txo?oi "?txu +
164  + "pe 'ro -- ,"no?on + 'ma?a"txi 'ka'na?a"ta "hai
-- ."?pam 'ber"da +
168  + ."pe 'ro"?pa 'na'?kah"na +
```

120 And that is why nowadays we see that the Basilisk has a -- thing on the top of her head, because, it is said, that is the potsherd, where it was thrown.

133 And nowadays, wherever the Basilisk -- sees us, whether she be bending over on a tree, or bending over on a rock, or bending over inside a cave, what she does when she sees us is nod her head, on the tree: it is said that she is grinding, because she used to be a miller.

148 And that is why she does the same thing nowadays when she sees us.

149 And that is why people say nowadays when the Basilisk sees us and nods her head on the tree,

155 "It's really true: she's grinding."

158 People say that she wants to give us one of her tortillas to eat, and so she shows us that she is grinding.

164 But we don't know if it is really true.

168 But so it is thought.

Notes on the Text[8]

1-3 This is one variant of the introductory formula favored by González. Each informant has his own. The root |ohron| 'speak' with this substantive-deriving suffix designates any act of speaking at length, not just tales.

The general classifier |tee|, here with |vn| 'one' and Spanish otro, accounts for most numeral + classifier occurrences (cf. 125-6). Note the elision of the harmonic vowel here and in 5, and its frequent assimilation to a preceding vowel (in contrast to the usual progressive assimilation of vowels in Chortí: |e|vn|tee| 'e?en"te?e 'the one'. The numbers through five are: 'in"te?e, 'txa?a"te?e, 'ux"te?e, 'txan"te?e, 'ho?o"te?e; only the first four are in general use (and govern a classifier), and above five, Spanish numerals without a classifier are used: "seis "mes 'six months'.

The following Spanish loans, or their derivatives or adaptations, are found in the text, in order of first appearance: otro 'other' (1), contar 'tell' (3), que 'that' (4, 12, 28, 56, 67, 79, 85, 113, 118, 130, 142, 145, 151, 158, 159), día 'day' (5), mentar 'name' (6), criada 'servant' (6, 55, 58, 61, 66), angel 'angel' (9, 43, 46), tajo 'chip' (24, 93), entonces 'then' (30, 40, 95), patrón 'master' (35), mandar 'order' (63), cualquier 'some' (69), animal 'animal' (70), por eso 'because of that' (71, 120, 149, 162), pero 'but' (73, 78, 103, 164, 168), tranco 'difficult' (81?), porque 'for, because' (85, 108, 118, 129), ahora 'now' (91), cosa 'thing' (126), o 'or' (137, 140), lo que 'what' (139), cuando 'when' (139, 148, 152), verdad 'truth' (156, 167), gente 'people' (158).

3 It is likely that the txe?e here and the txe of 4, 11, 28, etc., are the same root or related by a no-longer-productive derivational pattern. See Fought 1967 for a discussion of the |na| 'subjective' suffix, which functions as a proform for the 'subject', so that the next substantive, if any, is functionally the 'subject' but semantically more like the object. The obvious transformational solution must somehow account for the real passive in Chortí, built on a |?tsa| suffix.

The |a| prefix here identifies an imperfective active construction. There are two sets of personal prefixes and one of suffixes in Chortí (see Fought 1970 for a discussion of their syntax and semantics). The u-set ends in a morpho-phonemic linking element here written |&|, whose alternants (gu, u, i) or absence are predictable from the adjoining mor-phophonemes (Fought 1967:109-11). The a-set lacks this element and has quite different morphophonemics. The basic function of the u-prefixes, as noted as early as Tozzer 1906, is possession. With athematic (substantive) forms in Chortí there is a morphologically conditioned alternation between the first-person singular |ni&| (39, 55, 58, 61, 63) and thematic forms having |vn&| (67, 72, 74, 75). The other forms are the same in both environments: second-person singular |a&| (66), second-person plural |i&| (not attested here), first-person plural |ka&| (122), and third-person |u&| (bef. V: 36, 48, 119, 134, 142, 143, 148, 152, 153, 161, 162; bef. |h|: 18, 21, 27, 51, 70, 87, 88, 107, 111,

128, 135, 138, 143, 144, 153, 154; bef. C: 15, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 44, 51, 63, 75, 89, 92, 93, 94, 99, 100, 104, 111, 116, 128, 131, 140, 142, 146, 148, 161.

5 |ta| 'at' has both spatial and temporal reference: 'in 'io?o"pa 'ta'txi"nam 'I'm coming to town' and 'tan"te?e "di 'ia 'at one time', a quite close match with 'Once upon a time, ...' in function. This sets the time of reference in a remote and indefinite past.

6 The determinative |e| is functionally very like the Spanish definite article which usually translates it. Here it is a drawled variant before hestiation pause. These most often come just before a Spanish loan in the text, though the pattern is not so striking here as in some other texts.

The Basilisk is an iguana-like reptile with a membranous bag or comb on its head and a dorsal crest.

9 The plural clitic -|o?p| is only attested here in the text. Other examples show a rather elastic domain of the feature of plurality: 'ka"nuó?p 'u'tsi"kio?p, 'ka"no 'u'tsi"kio?p, and 'ka "nuo?p 'u'tsi"ki all mean 'They learned to count', and the first option is the least frequently chosen.

10 |ani| is a particle meaning 'indefinite past time'. The next aspect marker, in 12, is perfective in relation to this time of reference.

12 |tahui| is anomalous: its u-form, 'u'ta'hui 'his finding it', lacks a thematic suffix, and it has two syllables rather than the almost universal one for thematic roots.

13 |ua| 'stand up', like |pak| 'bend over' (18) and |?txa| 'lie down' (49), belongs to a small class taking the 'translative' suffix rather than a causative: 'u'ua"?pu 'his standing it on end', 'u'pak"?pu 'his bending it over', and 'u'?txa"?pu 'his laying it down' are examples of this formation. The |vr| suffix derives neutral

'cursive' forms from these roots, among others. The very common "uar 'progressive action' particle (cf. Sp. estar) is probably derived from |ua| also, but the pattern is not a productive one (cf. 29).

14 The root is |hu?tx| 'grind, mill' (cf. 146-7). The imperfective |a|- prefix regularly interacts this way with |hu...| (cf. |ti|ka&|?pa| 'ti'ka"?pa 'to ourselves', but |ti|ka&|hut| 'in our faces', 'in front of us', 'ti"ko?oit).

15 |men| 'act' with a possessive indicates the agent of the two -|na| 'subjective' constructions here.

18 |ta|ma|u&|hut| 'on its surface' shows regular morphophonemic loss of intervocalic |h| at morph boundaries. |hut | alone means 'eye', but has important classificatory functions: "u?ut "nio?or 'forehead' (lit. 'eye of my head'), "u?ut 'ni"nu?u?k 'Adam's apple', etc., but cf. 51 "u?ut 'e"rum 'the surface of the earth, 135 'ta"mu?ut 'e"te?e 'on the trunk (visible surface) of the tree, and 138 'ta"ma 'u?ut"tun 'on the rock'.

20 |iahaa | is the distal demonatrative, opposed by 'i"ra 'this' (cf. |ir| 'see').

21 Either |u&|hahp|i| or *|u&|uahp|i| would yield this form, but the initial consonant shows up in 'hahp"na 'grabbed'.

25 |naa?k| 'belly' is another important classificatory root. Here it refers to the wall of the bowl, but cf. 'u"na?a?k 'ni'txi "kin 'the side of my face' (lit. 'belly of my ear'), 'u"na?a?k 'e "?txen 'wall of the cave'(140), and 'u"na?a?k 'e"pa?a 'the middle of the tortilla'.

26 The root is |hur| 'pierce': cf. 'hur"?pir 'pierced' and 18 above.

27 |ta|ma|r| 'in it', 'on it' has an -|r| when not followed by a u-form. Cf. 'io?o"pe?en 'ta"kar 'I came with him'.

28 |tahn| is difficult to translate: 'u"tahn 'ni"?ka?p 'the palm of my hand', and here, the top of the head. Both |hor| and its morphophonemic back-formation |or| ("to?or 'on the head' from either |ta|hor| or *|ta|or|) are glossed 'extremity' in their classificatory uses: "or 'ni"?ka?p 'my finger' (|?ka?p| 'hand + arm').

29 |?tsah| 'stick in', 'penetrate' is another translative root (cf. 13) and like the others takes a |uan| thematic suffix in a-constructions: 'a'pa"kuan 'It bends over', etc. The lack of a personal affix here marks a third-person perfective whose 'subject' is the potsherd.

|xe| is a relative pronominal, 'which' or 'who', and |hur| 'pierce' has the -|h|- 'potential' infix, which in perfectives has little force.

31 |ta|ka| 'with' has an 'attributive' prefix and the |ix| 'effective' clitic, meaning approximately the same as the perfective aspect. The whole forms means something close to 'and with that, ...'.

|ar| 'speak' (cf. 52 and the related |aar| of 36) is 'shout' with this thematic suffix and an a-prefix.

37 |tu?ka|tik |si?ts | 'which boy?' is idiomatic here. Cf. 'ma'tu"?ka 'a"ian 'There is none' and 'tu"?kaŋ'?ku"xi 'what I eat'.

39 |ni&|hor| "nio?or 'my head' is automatic. The resulting form has two beats, ~~but~~ and the i is nonsyllabic.

41 |tar|i| 'go there' is opposed to |tar|a| 'go here'; there is a causative, 'u'ta"res 'his bringing it'.

53 Reduction of vowel sequences is especially frequent with |ix| 'effective', which is close in meaning to the perfective aspect. The morphophonemic form here is |tu?ka|ix|to|(cf. |por|eso|ix|to| in 120 below). |to| 'resumptive' marks the transition between two successive stages or blocs of action in the narrative. Cf. "kon'da 'max'ta'ken"to 'When I was a kid, ...' and 105, 114, and 120.

56 |ma| is a negative and |ka| an interrogative clitic; the personal prefix |a&| has fallen together in a long syllable with the interrogative element.

60 '?ah"rer 'ta"ka 'at once' is an idiom: |ahr| is a classifier of 'repetitions' (cf. 109). 'e"ra 'this' is apparently related to 'i"ra , and both to |ir| 'see'.

65 |ma|atxi| 'nobody' is the only attestation of the Mayan root meaning 'man' in a number of the other languages. Negatives in Chortí form another classification system: "ma 'tu"?ka 'nothing', "ma "ha?ax 'no one', "ma 'ko"txa 'no way', etc. |hai| 'if' is a sentence adjunct here; it also occurs with the general classifier: "ma 'hai"te?e 'it's nothing' and 'hai"te?e 'a'tu"hri 'How much is it worth?'

67 "ne?en 'I' is the independent pronominal form, based like the others ("ne?et 'thou', "no?on 'we', "no?ox 'you') on |na| and the pronominal suffix set. The corresponding third-person independent form is "ha?ax.

72 |vn&|hur|i| 'my piercing it' represents an especially complex morphophonemic alternation. The same form in 74 lacks the nasalization (which is a feature of nuclei only in such first-person singular forms). Other roots, not ending in |r|, would usually have nasalized nuclei but no nasal consonant: |vn|akn|i| 'I weed' is normally 'ã?ãk"ni, in contrast with |a|akn|i| 'he weeds'(cf. Fought 1967:104-36, 158-62).

76 Informants more readily translate |naat| as 'know' (saber) than as 'think' (pensar). 'I thought she wouldn't die' follows the text more closely (cf. 65).

77 |txam| 'die', like |lo?k| 'go out' (107, 115), and |otx| 'go in' (109), belongs to the class of roots taking the |vi| thematic suffix and having to do with changes of state or position. Others are |kar| 'get drunk' and |pur| 'burn'. These roots have u-causative forms (as if from u-thematic formations) but no u-thematic forms: 'u'txam"se 'his killing it', but 'a'txa"mai 'he dies'.

92 |pa| 'reflexive' with |ket| 'keep' means 'remain' or 'become', depending on whether it is perfective (as here, 'become') or not (cf. Sp. quedarse).

96 |vxi| 'go' is irregular in several respects. It is the only root with a |v| radical vowel, it does not have derived forms, and has a unique |n| thematic suffix.

97 |kai| is almost always in a perfective context, as here. A few occurrences are attested with imperfective prefixes: 'a"kai 'a'?kah"na 'It began to be told ...', and 'a"kai 'u'tsih"?pa 'He begins to be able to write.' Much more common in imperfective uses

is the presumably related |kahi|: 'a"ka?ai 'ta'ku?u'?tsih "?pa?ar 'He begins his writing'; there is also a neutral causative form, 'u'kah"ies, but the lack of attested forms does not permit a conclusion about their relation to |kai|.

102 |sut|'turn', 'revolve' + |pa| 'reflexive' and |?pix| 'live' + |?ka| 'middle' in this context give unusually clear evidence for the values of these suffixes. The range of meaning of |sut| is very much like that of E. 'turn': 'u'su"ti 'u"?pa 'ko"io 'te 'He turned himself into a Coyote', and 'su'tur"hut 'with eyes (face?) turned away'. The first of the two groups in the text here is perfective, the second imperfective.

107 The corresponding u-causative of |lo?k| 'go out' is 'u'lo?k"se 'his removing it'. The a-causatives have either the |es| or |s| alternants of the suffix: 'txa'mes"na 'killed', and 'a'txam"san 'He kills'.

114-6 Since |?kan| 'want' is the future auxiliary (cf. Rumanian future), ambiguities and idiomatic usages akin to those of Romance are common. It is not clear here whether she didn't want it removed (ne voulait pas) because of the pain or refused to have it removed (n'a pas voulu). Another ambiguous case is 160-1.

114 |kai|to|ani| 'when it was beginning', with assimilation.

119 'in"gue?e 'my eating it'. The root is probably |ueh|, with |e| thematic, or, as in the text, |vr|. Other instances have firmly established the initial |u| (as against |h|), but the final |h| is not certain.

120 The passage beginning here and ending with 148 was added for my benefit. Such explanations are missing from comparable tales told by others.

121 |koneer| 'today' is imperfective, and refers to the unexpired portion of today, while |sahmi| 'today' refers to the time from midnight to the time of speaking.

129 The use of |por|kee| 'because' with a somewhat weak sense of causation, together with |por|eso| 'because of this', is a basic narrative device in the explanatory passages of the folktales, typically with the circularity displayed here.

133-48 The bobbing or nodding of the Basilisk would come as no surprise to the Chortí listeners to this story, of course, and must indeed be very much like the straight-backed bending from the hips used by women grinding corn on a quern.

148 |?pan| 'thus' and 'yes' (cf. Latin sic). Somewhat reluctantly, a compound 'ma'?pam"?pan was offered to Bible translators for 'sin'. 'Unseemliness' would be a closer translation.

162 |ir|se| 'show' is the u-causative of 'see'. The corresponding a-causative is |a|ir|s|an| 'e?er"san 'he shows', which has given rise to a back-formed perfective 'er"san 'showed'.

165-6 Tales often end with a more pointed disclaimer by the teller: 'Since we didn't see it, we don't know if it is true'.

Footnotes

[1]My research on Chortí has been supported by National Science Foundation grants GS 516 and 1175 (Prof. Floyd G. Lounsbury, principal investigator) and IG 68-14. I wish to thank Prof. Lounsbury for his encouragement and guidance, while noting that the responsibility for the approach taken here is mine alone. I owe a great deal to the patience and skill of my informants, in particular, to Sr. Isidro González.

[2]Wisdom 1940, Girard 1949, and Girard 1962 can be used, with caution, as sources of ethnographic data. See also Fought 1969 [redacted] for an evaluation of these works on one point.

Since all or nearly all the Chortí are bilingual, and for theoretical reasons (including consistency), no distinction is made between originally Spanish and originally Chortí or other forms in the solution and transcription. Spanish loans are listed in the grammatical notes, however.

[3]The terminology is borrowed from Hockett 1958:94. Either i or u is a satellite when adjacent to a lower vowel or a syllable boundary. If a syllable contains two like vowels, ii or uu, the first is the satellite, unless the second is at a syllable boundary.

[4]The components defined here are based on general phonetics and the contrastive sets of Chortí utterances on record; they are not drawn from any putatively universal list. There is a discussion of this point in Fought 1970 (forthcoming).

[5]A tense articulation is defined here as one resulting

in complete closure at the point of articulation when the back-pressure is relatively high (that is, when the glottis is fully open or fully closed and elevated, compressing the air trapped in the oral cavity behing the oral articulator). All other articulations are lax. Thus, voiceless or glottalized stops are tense, while voiceless spirants, with incomplete closure by the articulator, are lax.

[6]Ladefoged 1967:12: '... the arytenoid cartilages are pressed inwards so that the posterior portions of the vocal cords are held together and only the anterior (ligamental) portions are able to vibrate.'

[7]In the notes, vertical partitions enclose symbols in a morphophonemic notation. Except for |v| (the same vowel as the preceding peak in the pause group, or if none, i) these have the same value as the corresponding phonological symbol. Fought 1967 treats the complex alternations in detail.

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